

+ SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to God For All Things!

December 13, 2015	Saint Herman of Alaska (28 th Sunday)	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
	Sunday of the Forefathers of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ		
December 19	Saturday	NO VESPERS	
December 20	29 th Sunday after Pentecost	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius, and Orestes at Sebaste (284). **Venerable Herman, Wonderworker of Alaska (1836).** Virgin-martyr Lucy of Syracuse (304). New Hieromartyr Priest Alexander and Martyr John (1920). New Hieromartyrs Priests Vladimir, Alexander, Jacob (1937). New Hieromartyr Priest Nicholas (1938). New Hieromartyra Priests Emilian and Basil (1941). Venerable Arcadius, Monk of Novotorsk (11th c.). Venerable Mardarius, recluse of the Kiev Caves (13th c.). Venerable Arsenius of Latros (8-10th c.). Saint Dositheus Metropolitan of Moldavia (1693). Venerable Nicodemus of Romania. Saint Gabriel (Gavril), Patriarch of Serbia (1659). Saint Odilia, Virgin of Alsace (720). Venerable Innocent, Bishop of Cherson (1857). Saint Gabriel, Bishop of Imereti, (1896). Saint Columba of Terryglass (549). Saint Judoc, Hermit in Ponthieu (d. 668). Saint Edburga, Nun of Lyminge (7th c.). Saint Ares, Monk.

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop Boulos and Bishop Yohanna, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Nectarios, Luke, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, Eugene, Leonid, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Jacobus, Leonid, Andrew. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mother Victoria. Mothers Raphaela, Michaela, Catherine, Anna. Sister Piama. Monk Victor, Matushka Joanna, Paul, Peter, Mary, Valentina, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Helen, Catherine, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Anita, Maria, Michael, Linda, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Nicole, Ashley, Mark, Cathy, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Isaiah, Jamie, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, Betty, David, Warren.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Mary Alexczuk were offered December 6, at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of her daughter.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist), Alexander Ressetar, Father John Southern, Graham Shin and John and Karen Makara were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of newly-departed Mary Alexczuk were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of her family.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Olga Prawlocki were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Phil and Andrea Dzwonczyk.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann, Archbishop Kiprian (Borisevich) and Maria Ivanovna Krakow were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Stephen and Mary Steciak, Mary Pupchek, John Popka, Anna Rinko, Steven Polansky, Theresa Polansky, Wasyl Pytel, Andrew Andriadis, Glen Cooley and Julie and Joe Firley were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

REDEEMING THE TIME

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil" [Ephesians 5:15-16].

To "walk"—in the context of this epistle—is a metaphor for how we conduct our lives. We can live wisely or unwisely. To "walk" unwisely means that we can easily resemble a "fool." Avoiding such a "false step," but on the contrary walking with wisdom, will depend on how much effort we put into "making the most of the time." This can also be translated as "redeem the time." To "redeem" the time is, first, not to "waste time," especially on what is superfluous. More positively, it could mean to spend our time in worthwhile pursuits, seeking to do the good in all of life's various circumstances. We are children of God at all times, not only when we are in church or before the icons in our domestic prayer corner. How we live and how we interact with others is basically how we express our Christian faith on a daily basis.

On a deeper level, to "redeem the time" could also mean to *sanctify* time, both remembering and honoring the fact that the full expanse of our lives—our "lifetime"—is a gift from God, for as humans our lives unfold within the time of this world as created by God. Our time is limited because our lives are of finite duration. An awareness of this can go a long way in how we appreciate—and therefore "redeem"—the time.

We are drawing closer to the celebration of the Lord's Incarnation. We can "redeem" this time within the rhythm of ecclesial time, the time of the Church. We need to pick up where we perhaps left off for the long Thanksgiving Day weekend. We have "feasted" along with our fellow Americans; now let us fast as Orthodox Christians. To squander a season of preparation before a Feast by neglecting prayer, almsgiving and fasting is to act "unwisely" if we claim to be serious Orthodox Christians. Any struggle against our lower instincts to eat, drink and be merry as the most meaningful pursuits in life is one sound way of redeeming the time.

The Apostle Paul writes that "the days are evil." In a fallen world, every single day presents us with the possibility—if not probability—of encountering evil on a grand or limited scale. To somehow believe the days we are living in are *not* that evil is to be lost in a wishful thinking divorced from any rational perception of reality. We live in a time wherein people have forgotten God, and through this forgetfulness lose sight of our basic humanity. To de-sanctify the world (by claiming that the world is an autonomous reality and a result of blind forces) is to debase humanity, for only through faith in God can we have faith in the goodness of human nature.

We can be "in the world," but not "of the world" if we *choose* to "make the most of the time, because the days are evil." One of the key words here is "choose." Do we really have a hard choice to make? Hardly! In my humble opinion, within the grace-filled life of the Church the choices before us are very easy to make!

Here is a "simple" prayer (but just try to put it into daily practice) from a holy elder that teaches us how to redeem the time"

O God, be attentive unto helping me.

O Lord, make haste to help me.

Direct, O Lord God everything that I do, read and write, everything that I say and try to understand to the glory of Your holy Name.

From You have I received a good beginning and my every deed ends in You.

Grant me O God, that I might not anger You, my Creator, in word, deed or thought, but may all my deeds, counsels and thoughts be to the glory of Your most holy Name. Amen.

—*From the diary of Elder Anthony of Optina, 1820*

Reflections in Christ / Father Steven Kostoff /

THE HOLY MARTYRS EUSTRATIUS, AUXENTIUS, EUGENE, MARDARIUS AND ORESTES

These five courageous men shone like five shining stars in the dark days of the Christ-persecuting Emperors Diocletian and Maximian. Saint Eustratius was a Roman commander in the city of Satalionus; Eugene was his companion in the army; Orestes was likewise a distinguished soldier; Auxentius was a priest; and Mardarius was an ordinary citizen who came, like Eustratius, from the town of Arabrak. The imperial deputies Lysias and Agriculus tortured Auxentius first since he was a priest. Seeing the innocent suffering of Christians, Eustratius appeared in front of Lysias and declared that he was also a Christian. While Eustratius was being tortured, Eugene appeared before the judge and cried out: "Lysias, I too am a Christian." When Eustratius was led through the town of Arabrak with the other martyrs, Mardarius saw them from the roof of his house. He took leave of his wife and two young children and rushed after the martyrs, shouting into the faces of the tormentors: "I too am a Christian, like my lord Eustratius." When Saint Orestes was target-practicing in the presence of Lysias, the cross he was wearing fell from his chest and Lysias realized that he was a Christian, after which Orestes openly confessed his faith. Orestes was a young and handsome soldier and towered above all the other soldiers in stature. Auxentius was beheaded, Eugene and Mardarius died while being tortured, Orestes expired on a red-hot iron grid, and Eustratius died in a fiery furnace. Saint Blaise (February 11) administered Holy Communion to Saint Eustratius in prison before his death. Their relics were later taken to Constantinople and buried in the church dedicated to them: The Holy Five Companions. They were seen alive in that church, and Saint Orestes appeared to Saint Dimitri of Rostov (October 28). A beautiful prayer by Saint Eustratius is extant, which is read at the Midnight Service on Saturday: "Most highly do I magnify Thee, O Lord."

THE HOLY MARTYR LUCY THE VIRGIN

With her mother, Lucy visited the grave of Saint Agatha in Catania, where Saint Agatha appeared to her. Her mother, who had dropsy, was then miraculously healed in the church. Lucy distributed all her goods to the poor, and this embittered her betrothed, who accused her of being a Christian before Paschasius the judge. The wicked judge ordered that she be taken to a brothel in order to defile her. However, by the power of God she remained immovable, as if rooted to the earth, and not even a multitude of people was able to move her from that spot. Then an enraged pagan pierced her throat with a sword and she gave up her soul to God and took up her habitation in the Kingdom of Eternity. Lucy suffered in the year 304.

SAINT JUDOC, HERMIT (Joder, Josse, Joyce, Joost, Jost, Judganoc) Died 668; feast of his translation is January 9. Son of the Breton King Juthael and younger brother of King Saint Judicael (f.d. December 17), Saint Judoc hesitated in his religious vocation. He renounced his position and wealth, and was ordained to the priesthood about 636 at Ponthieu; nevertheless, when his brother abdicated, Judoc ruled Brittany for some months. After a pilgrimage to Rome, he left Brittany and became a hermit at Runicum near the mouth of the Canche (later Villiers-Saint-Josse, near Saint-Josse-sur-Mer and Etaples), where he died. He was entombed above ground and his body remained incorrupt. It is said that his hair, beard, and nails continued to grow and that his successors in the hermitage had to cut them occasionally. It is interesting to note the Chaucer's "Wife of Bath" swears by 'God and by Seint Joce' and that the popularity of the saint in England is evidenced by the frequency of the Christian name 'Joyce' for both men and women. His cultus also spread north to Flanders (where he is known as Joost), Germany, Austria, Alsace, and Switzerland.